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LETTER DATED 27 SEPTEMBER 1996 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I would like to draw your attention to Security Council document S/1996/774 submitted by a south Korean representative, which has provoked our response.

As was already explained through the statement of the spokesman of the Ministry of the People's Armed Forces dated 23 September 1996 (see S/1996/768, annex), a unit of the Korean People's Army left the port of Wonsan on 13 September 1996 aboard a small training submarine and conducted a routine training on the waters of our side of the East Sea. It so happened that the submarine had sudden engine trouble, drifted and was stranded aground on the waters of Kangrung.

However, the south Korean authorities are exaggerating the incident in an attempt to make use of the incident for their own political purpose.

It is imprudent for south Korea, which is not party to the Korean Armistice Agreement, to talk about the observance of the Korean Armistice Agreement. From the beginning, the south Korean authorities objected to the conclusion of the Korean Armistice Agreement, and in collaboration with the American troops destroyed the armistice agreement systematically while hastening war preparations.

Through this incident the world once again witnessed the true colour of their barbarousness and beastliness.

Our people and people's army have become vehemently indignant about the manslaughter by the enemies.

If the enemies do not return our small submarine, survivors and the dead unconditionally while continuing to make ill use of the incident for the sinister political purpose, we will be forced to take strong countermeasures.

The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will closely watch the development of the situation.

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I should be grateful if you would have both the present letter and its annexes (the report on the emergency joint meeting of the Government, political parties and social organizations of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the statement of the Korean Central News Agency) circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) KIM Hyong U
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex I

Report on the emergency joint meeting of the Government political parties and social organizations of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, dated 26 September 1996

An emergency joint meeting of the Government, political parties and social organizations of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was held on 26 September 1996 in relation to recent grave state of the situation on the Korean peninsula which is being driven to the brink of war by the south Korean authorities.

The joint meeting was attended by Comrade Pak Song Chol, a member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea and Vice-President of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Comrade Yang Hyong Sup, an alternate member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea and President of the Supreme People's Assembly of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Mr. Kim Byong Sik, Chairman of the Central Committee of the Social Democratic Party of Korea, Ms. Ryu Mi Yong, Chairwoman of the Central Committee of the Chunduist Chongu Party, as well as other high ranking officials of Government, political parties and social organizations.

The issue addressed in the meeting was "on taking countermeasures to the reckless provocative schemes of south Korean authorities who are driving the situation on the Korean peninsula to the brink of war".

Participants in the joint meeting condemned the south Korean authorities for brutally killing our People's army men who could not but go ashore off Kangrung, south Korea, owing to sudden engine trouble during routine training on 18 September 1996, and unanimously stressed that the south Korean authorities should pay dearly for their sinister acts.

The emergency joint meeting adopted a decision on taking strong countermeasures in response to the dangerous manoeuvre of the Kim Yong Sam cliques who are misusing the recently occurred accident during a training mission, aggravating the north-south confrontation and driving the situation on the Korean peninsula to the brink of war in succession to the brutal crackdown on the peaceful unification events organized by the students of "Han Chong Ryon" of south Korea on 15 August 1996 by unreasonably relating those to us.

Annex II

Statement of the Korean Central News Agency
dated 27 September 1996

As already reported, a subunit of the Korean People's Army was on routine training aboard a small training submarine in the waters of the north side of the East Sea of Korea on 18 September but engine trouble compelled it to drift southward and run aground in the waters of the south side off Kangrung.

In this connection, the spokesman of the Ministry of the People's Armed Forces of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in a statement dated 23 September, officially confirmed that a small training submarine of the Korean People's Army was stranded in the waters of the south side and demanded that the submarine and the surviving and dead soldiers be returned unconditionally and immediately.

This expressed the goodwill and wish of the north side that the accident would not develop into tension or misfortune that it is not helpful to peace and the peaceful reunification of the Korean peninsula.

The south Korean authorities, however, did not reciprocate our goodwill to solve the problem peacefully but answered it with evermore vicious slander and challenge to the north side and are continuing to use the accident for sinister political purposes.

From the beginning, they adopted a provocative attitude that is very dangerous.

Although they directly confirmed that the submarine of the north side was stranded off Kangrung while drifting after engine trouble on 18 September, they branded it as an "armed spy boat" and started a provocative campaign.

Although they judged that the crew of the submarine could not but go ashore because the boat was stranded, they branded them as "intruding spies" and mobilized a joint army-police search team to kill them.

The soldiers of the north side should have been rescued and protected because they were in danger after an accident in the sea while engaging in training.

To the consternation of the people, the soldiers of the north side were branded by the south Korean authorities as "armed spies" and "armed communist bandits" and became the target of military attack of the south Korean army-police search team.

The south Korean authorities mobilized helicopters and tens of thousands of troops, policemen and reserve forces to search the mountains and residential quarters in the Kangrung area day and night and to kill the Korean People's Army soldiers, who had no self-defence arms.

In the course of this, nearly 20 soldiers of the north side were killed in cold blood.

There were no grounds and conditions for them to become the target of gunfire.

They had no arms and equipment needed for intrusion or destruction. Moreover, those who were killed were crewmen including the captain, the chief engineer and navigator, as was reported by south Korean radios. What could they do on the land after abandoning the boat?

As regards the south Korean authorities' propaganda about "intrusion of an armed spy boat" and "armed spies", officials of the United States, Japan and other Western nations express doubt, saying "it is not clear whether it was an intrusion and what the intruders intended to do".

This is a denial of the argument about "intrusion" and "spies".

As a matter of fact, the soldiers of the north side went ashore without any weapons because they left in the boat the personal arms they had used in training. And they did not attack or destroy anything and did not hurt anyone there.

The south Korean authorities are aggravating the tension by using the accident, which could have been settled peacefully, for the purpose of inter-Korean confrontation.

What they seek is clear.

The Kim Young San regime is extremely uneasy in a serious political and economic crisis at home and abroad.

In south Korea, they are exposed to attacks from broad segments of people and opposition parties on the threshold of "presidential election" campaign.

In north-south relations, they are not recognized as a dialogue partner.

They are extremely worried as they might lose the patronage of the United States and Japan.

The south Korean authorities seek a way out of this crisis in aggravating the tensions by slandering fellow countrymen and firing guns on the Korean peninsula.

If the Korean People's Army soldiers had been such "commandoes" or intruders as are described by the south Korean puppets, they would have had arms and equipment for that purpose and would have annihilated the puppet troops and policemen even if they were 10,000 strong.

The Kim Young Sam group's frantic anti-Democratic People's Republic of Korea campaign over the accident is no more than a reckless act of those who have committed crimes against the nation.

The south Korean authorities are mistaken, however.

Even if they ask their United States and Japanese masters for help, bring the case to the United Nations General Assembly and threaten to re-examine their "policy on north Korea", they can never produce a "spy boat" and "spies" as there is no shower falling from a clear sky.

Their campaign over the fictitious "spy boat" and "spies" will only aggravate the situation and lead to war on the Korean peninsula.

The traitor Kim young Sam called for a "strong countermeasure" and agitated for war, saying that the United States or Japan would have declared war against the country that infiltrated an "armed submarine and special unit". This clearly shows where he wants to lead the case.

His statement cannot be construed otherwise than meaning that he would start a war against the north.

Our position towards peace and war is already known well. We want peace, but we are fully prepared to punish those who disturb peace.

As the flame was kindled in south Korea, we cannot remain a victim for an indefinite period.

When the south Korean puppets brutally cracked down on the patriotic pro-reunification events of the South Korean Federation of University Student Councils and students around 15 August with the mobilization of hundreds of thousands of combat police and injured and imprisoned thousands of them in an anti-communist fascist frenzy against the north, we controlled ourselves and hoped they would act with reason.

Even when the south Korean authorities fired at our soldiers from the wrecked boat and killed many of them, we displayed maximum self-restraint and asked them to return the boat, survivors and dead bodies, out of a desire to solve the problem peacefully.

Our demand is an exercise of the victim's legitimate right. The south Korean authorities, the offenders, should have approached our legitimate demand with goodwill. But, they answered our demand with the mobilization of many more troops and police for a more brutal operation to kill the survivors and with a campaign of exaggerating and "internationalizing" the incident.

It is self-evident that we the victims cannot show self-restraint any longer as the offenders behave more arrogantly.

As victims, we have the right to retaliate on the offenders. Our retaliation may be hundredfold or thousandfold. No matter what kind of retaliation we may make, the south Korean puppets will be wholly to blame.

Firing should be answered with firing.

The south Korean bellicose elements are approaching the danger line with reckless firing.

The south Korean authorities must immediately stop their ill-intentioned campaign over our wrecked boat and return our submarine and surviving and dead crewmen immediately and unconditionally.

Time is not unlimited.